On prison discipline your Committee moved Report — that a very considerable and happy interest is daily excited in the public mind respecting this subject. Our legislature begin to feel that something must be done besides immuring the prisoner — that attempts should be made for his reformation, so that when he is again let loose upon the Community. he may not be more hardened in Sin than when he entered.

To learn this result two systems are in operation called the Auburn & Philadelphia systems. That called the Auburn - requires Solitary Confinement at meals & at night. Classified labour during the day, and Constant watching of the prisoners by day & by night so far as may be needed to prevent Conversation among them. Hence this system depends for its success mainly upon good & faithful officers. The other (that of P.) relies less upon the officers, & more upon stone walls & iron doors — leaving the convicts to themselves, each in his narrow cell from the day he enters till he leaves the prison.

The advantages claimed by their respective penitentiaries, are as follows —

1. The preference is supposed to be in favour of the Auburn system, in the Cost of the buildings - the expense of the Philadelphia plan being 6 or 7 times more than in the other.

2. The convicts in the Phil. prison work at their own discretion & consequently to little profit — whilst under the Auburn System their labour is made very productive.

3. Convicts enjoy better health under the Auburn than under the Philadelphia system.

4. It is difficult under the Phila. plan to watch the prisoners, or impart to them religious instruction.

But the advantages of the Phil. are —

1. The impossibility of any intercourse between the prisoners by which they may be schooled in bile.

2. The greater severity of the punishment.

The opinion of the friends of this system as to its success may be summed up in the words of Gov. Wolf to the legislature — He says, the prisoners work to more advantage; having no opportunities of conversation or amusement they eagerly desire employment. Here all communication is cut off. no one knows his fellow prisoner, no acquantance is formed. no conversation takes place. the convict sees no one. & holds communion with none except such as will give him good advice.

But ~~there seems to be there is~~ a decided objection to this system from the fact of its Solitariness. Experience has shown that it is next to impossible for a man to endure Solitary Confinement for any length of time without loosing the powers of his mind in a great degree — The testimony of

those who have visited the Solitary Convict proves the fact.

Said a member of the N. Jersey legislature to the writer - when I first went to Trenton I obtained admission to the cells of the prison (on the Phil. plan) and I saw among others a healthy fine looking young man immured from the crime of stealing a horse - which he denied. He had the appearance of one inured to crime. and if he had stolen it was probably the first act. He seemed deeply alive to the shame of his situation. On calling again the next year curiosity induced me to visit this man. He was sitting upon his pallet of straw with his head bowed between his knees. On calling to him he slowly raised himself & gazed upon his visitor. But what a wreck of constitution & of intellect did that face present - if the mind had not lost its equilibrium it was tottering on its base. Such squalid misery - such utter prostration of hope & every sentiment that could raise or reform character I never beheld - It was the work of one year.

We have also the testimony of the immortal Lafayette - who as we all know passed a long time in prison. He could advise with knowledge of the subject & his advice was that Phil. should adopt the Auburn system -

He wrote thus - "The people of Philadelphia think

that the system of Solitary confinement is a new idea, a new discovery: not so. It is only the revival of the system of the Bastile. The state of Penn. which has given to the world an example of humanity & whose code of philanthropy has been quoted & commended by all Europe, is now about to proclaim to the world the inefficacy of the system, & revive & restore the cruel modes of the most barbarous & unenlightened age. I hope my friends of Penn. will consider the effect this system had on the poor prisoners of the Bastile. I repaired to the scene on the second day of the demolition, and found all the prisoners had been deranged by their Solitary confinement except one. He had been a prisoner 25 years, and was led forth among the knights of the tumultuous riot of the people whilst engaged in tearing down the prison — He looked around with amazement for he had seen nobody for that space of time: and before night he was so much affected that he became a confirmed maniac. from which situation he never recovered.

This, it is true, was the effect of Solitary confinement without labour — whilst in most instances in the Penn. System labour is a part of the punishment — yet too frequently the sentence is — solitary confinement without labour.

The operation of the Auburn System is very different — There the prisoner learns that his comfort & happiness depends in a great degree upon his conduct in the prison, and will therefore insensibly improve in his morals & habits. He gets fixed & systematic habits of labour. and

finds enjoyment in Society & appreciates its value. He does not become a Misanthrope, but often makes good Resolutions to amend his life & live peaceably with all men — He comes out of prison a better man — both from the religious instruction he has received & the habits of labour & industry which he has acquired. Two objects are thus gained in prison Discipline of great importance — punishment for crime & amendment of character.

It may be added in conclusion that the Philadelphia system is pursued by the States South of New York, with but few exceptions.